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Country note**

Jordan

Summary

The Executive Director presents the country note for Jordan for a programme of cooperation for the period 2003 to 2007.

The situation of children and women

1. Jordan, with a per capita gross national product of $1,500, has a population of 5,182,000 which is 80 per cent urban; it is also youthful, with 51 per cent less than 19 years old and 33 per cent between 10-24 years old. The country's progress in basic health and other social indicators is impressive. Infant and under-five mortality rates (1999) are 29 and 35 per 1,000 live births respectively, with no gender disparities. However, both are higher in rural areas and in the southern part of the country. The maternal mortality ratio stands at 41 per 100,000 live births (1996); 95 per cent of mothers receive antenatal care, and trained medical professionals attend 97 per cent of deliveries. Immunization coverage is over 90 per cent for all antigens, and the country has been polio free since 1995. Hepatitis B, measles/mumps/rubella and *haemophilus influenzae* (Hib) vaccines are included in the national immunization programme. Micronutrient deficiencies remain a concern, especially goitre, which affects 33 per cent of children, and anaemia, which affects 28.6 per cent of women. The Government is giving priority to strengthening the

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** An addendum to the present report containing the final country programme recommendation will be submitted to the Executive Board for approval at its second regular session of 2002.

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child caring skills of parents and other caregivers. Less than 30 per cent of children between 3-5 years old are enrolled in pre-schools. The net enrolment rate in primary schools (grades 1-10) is 95 per cent, with no gender or geographical disparities; and the net enrolment rate for secondary education is 60 per cent.

2. There is a shortage of accurate data on children with special needs. According to government records, 70 per cent of reported cases of sexual violence are against children, but there is limited social research on the magnitude and the roots of the problem. The Ministry of Social Development provides institutional care for about 200 girls and 130 boys who are in need of special protection, excluding the disabled; non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide similar care to around 950 children. Child labour is also believed to be underreported, especially for girls. Therefore, the Ministry of Labour is establishing a national database on related issues and developing a national strategy for the elimination of child labour.

3. Of the estimated total number of disabled children, who constitute the largest visible group of children in special need, about 3 per cent, or some 7,000 children, benefit from special services through 105 centres. With UNICEF support, the Ministry of Health has established a system to screen children for disabilities. Several successful community-based rehabilitation programmes are supported by UNICEF and NGOs.

4. The participation of adolescents in public life is limited, and adolescent programmes do not target the needs of specific subgroups. UNICEF is supporting a national survey on the participation of adolescents in public life and on their aspirations and attitudes. Healthy lifestyles of this age group are becoming a concern. The 1999 Global Youth Tobacco Survey showed that in the 13- to 15-year-old age group, 14.5 per cent of girls and 25 per cent of boys smoke. With the support of the United Nations Foundation, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have started addressing the specific needs of adolescents jointly.

5. The Royal Family leads in keeping children high on the national agenda. In the context of the Global Movement for Children, a wide variety of traditional and new partners, including national opinion leaders and those from the private sector, have been mobilized to advocate for children. Jordan has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, although with reservations, and it has yet to publish them in the official gazette. The Two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on child soldiers and the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children have also been ratified. Progress was made in developing the Jordanian Childhood Act, which will ensure the harmonization of national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Lessons learned from past cooperation

6. Experience showed that while the overall mix of strategies was appropriate, the future programme should move from a vertical to an integrated life cycle approach; ensure better convergence of programme activities in selected geographic areas; strengthen monitoring and evaluation components; develop a more integrated communication strategy; and respond to emerging priorities in early child development (ECD), adolescents and protection issues. Experience also showed that

there is great potential for partnerships with the private sector in programming for children and women.

7. The existence of government and NGO structures did not always translate into real impact on the situation of children and women. The future programme should emphasize building institutional capacities for programme implementation; making essential planning tools available, such as disaggregated data for targeting the underserved; and drawing on the strength of partners to take the lead and support quality and comprehensive care services for children and women.

8. The community empowerment model developed by UNICEF proved successful in building the capacity of targeted communities in self-organization and self-help. However, national-level coordination of interventions by different partners needs to be strengthened in order to arrive at a comprehensive approach to community-led planning and management of social development programmes.

Proposed country programme strategy

9. The proposed programme of cooperation, developed with the participation of some 100 government, NGO, United Nations and youth partners, will adopt a life cycle, rights and gender-based approach. This approach has also been adopted for the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework processes. In addition, an emergency preparedness plan has been developed and is being updated regularly.

10. The overall goal of the proposed programme of cooperation, which comprises five interdependent programmes, is to promote the rights of children and women and contribute to their protection. The first two programmes relate to the global organizational priorities, while the third addresses a regional priority. To achieve its cross-cutting objectives, the country programme will capitalize on achievements gained, promote participation at all levels, and foster alliances with and for children. At the national level, the programme will strengthen the knowledge base, support rights monitoring and advocacy, and mobilize partnerships for policy dialogue and legislative change. At governorate and community levels, the programme will support the development of community self-help structures to reduce disparities in 5 of the 12 governorates.

11. The **integrated early child care and development (ECCD)** programme will support the translation of the national ECD strategy into legislative and administrative action, as well as into integrated programmes. It will ensure that in the five target governorates, the necessary knowledge and skills exist for providing integrated ECCD services and for applying the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness approach. Interventions for micronutrient deficiencies will be part of this community-oriented and family-focused programme. Parental education in integrated ECCD, including for fathers and communities, will encompass care, psychosocial stimulation and early learning as integral components. In addition to the Government and national NGOs, UNICEF will develop its partnership with the National Council for Family Affairs, and continue to work with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the private sector.

12. The **protection** programme will support action-oriented research and advocacy to raise public awareness on child protection issues; harmonize national legislation with both Conventions; and develop policies and support implementation of initiatives for the protection of children and women. The programme will build national capacities to address the needs of children deprived of parental care, of children and women victims of violence and abuse, as well as community-based rehabilitation of disabled children. UNICEF will continue its partnerships with the Government, national NGOs, the British Council and the International Labour Organization; and develop its partnership with the National Council for Family Affairs.

13. The **adolescent participation and empowerment** programme will support operational research, public awareness-raising and the development and implementation of a national youth strategy; and build the capacities of adolescents, especially girls, in leadership, life skills and healthy lifestyles. It will also provide forums for self-expression and organization. The programme will train service providers in participatory planning and in the implementation of programmes for adolescents. It will support the Government to create better environments in primary and secondary schools, and in youth centres. UNICEF will collaborate in this programme with UNFPA, WHO and Save the Children Alliance, in addition to government and national NGO partners.

14. The **community empowerment** programme will promote a national approach to community-led social development. The programme will work with NGOs and community leaders to mobilize local resources; establish community development structures; and strengthen their self-organization, participatory assessment and programme management skills. Through the convergence of all other programme interventions, this programme will empower families of under-privileged communities with skills and knowledge to effect positive behaviour change for the benefit of children and women. In addition to government and NGO partners, UNICEF will work with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNFPA, WHO, the World Food Programme and USAID.

15. The **national movement for children and monitoring of rights** programme will create awareness among policy and decision makers, media and prominent opinion leaders of key priority issues for children; and improve the skills of media persons in gender-sensitive reporting. It will also strengthen national capacities to effectively monitor the situation of children and women, identify disparities, and report on the implementation of the two Conventions and future plans for children. The programme will further ensure integrated monitoring and evaluation of all programme components as well as the development of programme communication plans in support of the other four programmes. In addition to the Government and national NGOs, UNICEF will work with UNDP, USAID and the private sector; and develop its partnership with the National Council for Family Affairs.

16. **Cross-sectoral costs** will be used to cover overall coordination in addition to financial and programme monitoring and evaluation.

Estimated programme budget

Estimated programme cooperation, 2003-2007[a]

(In thousands of United States dollars)

	Regular resources	*Other resources*	*Total*
Integrated early child care and development	490	1 000	1 490
Protection	460	1 500	1 960
Adolescent participation and empowerment	380	1 500	1 880
Community empowerment	510	1 000	1 510
National movement for children and monitoring of rights	550	500	1 050
Cross-sectoral costs	950	–	950
Total	**3 340**	**5 500**	**8 840**

[a] These are indicative figures only which are subject to change once aggregate financial data are finalized.